

VZCZCXRO6177
RR RUEHCN RUEHGH RUEHVC
DE RUEHBJ #3234 3370913
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 030913Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7051
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS BEIJING 003234

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/CM, EAP/PA, EAP/PD, C
HQ PACOM FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR (J007)
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENTIAL AFGHANISTAN SPEECH

Editorial Quotes

PRESIDENTIAL AFGHANISTAN SPEECH

a. "Obama's increase of troops in Afghanistan sparks controversy"

The official Communist Party international news publication Global Times (Huanqiu Shibao)(12/03)(pg 2): "Although the United States' allies expressed support for the increased U.S. troops in Afghanistan, criticism of the plan was more numerous. Meanwhile, the Taliban announced that it would fight to the end. Support for the war in the United States continues to fall. One important reason for the falling support is the enormous expense of the war. Afghans were apathetic about the announced increased in U.S. troops. One Afghan said that the local situation would not stabilize even if the U.S. sent all its troops to the country. Some Afghans also think that the U.S. troops are using the name of anti-terror war to cover their prolonged stay in Afghanistan."

b. "Obama's new Afghanistan strategy: attitude is clear but details are needed"

The official popular newspaper Beijing Youth Daily (Beijing Qingnianbao)(12/03)(pg B1): "In announcing his decision to increase the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Obama did not forget to mention and promote economic reconstruction, eliminating corruption, and enhancing cooperation with Pakistan. However, the new policy seems to lack details on specific implementation measures. Therefore, many experts think the policy is not persuasive. Reuters said that the new strategy seems to overly rely on military means and is quite vague about specific strategic goals. Most of the aid funding for Afghan development, about \$100 billion in 2010 being provided by the U.S., has been pocketed by Western contractors and corrupt Afghan officials who were a part of the Afghan reconstruction. In his speech, in order to respond to their pursuits and concerns, Obama did not fail to please any interests groups. Obama's speech was meant to have everything going the 'U.S. way.'"

c. "New Afghanistan policy cannot avoid old problems"

The official Xinhua Daily Telegraph (Xinhua Meiri Dianxun)(12/03)(pg 5): "The United States' difficulties in the War on Terror are directly related to its over-reliance on the military. The U.S. strategy of 'fighting against terrorism through war' did not effectively eliminate the threat of terrorism. Although Obama has attempted to improve the United States' image in the War on Terror by implementing a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy, he has still used war as his primary tool in his counterterrorism strategy in Afghanistan. In fact the U.S. military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan will only bring more chaos, not peace. Furthermore, driven by political motives, the United States has adopted questionable standards concerning terrorist organizations. At present, the U.S. War on Terror is still a serious situation. The U.S. should reflect more on its policies outside the battlefield,

instead of the war itself."

d. "Obama's Afghanistan quagmire"

The official Xinhua News Agency international news publication International Herald Leader (Guoji Xianqu Daobao)(12/03)(pg 5): "Chinese expert Yuan Peng at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations said that after the thorough contemplation first increasing troops and then withdrawing them has been Obama's plan, which is the result of wrestling and balancing between different groups. The U.S. emphasis on withdrawal indicates that it does not want to see the Afghanistan war become the second Viet Nam war. Increasing troops also shows that the Obama administration agrees that the war in Afghanistan will be militarily similar to Iraq. In the face of unpredictable political risks, Obama is helpless and has to send more troops to Afghanistan. If the United States refuses to send more troops to Afghanistan, it will anger European countries, widening the cracks in the strategic partnership between the United States and Europe and eventually leading to the disintegration of the Western world. There are still many unpredictable factors for the implementation of the new strategy. Biden, the Vice President, firmly opposes increasing troops. Undoubtedly Obama's decision will trigger contradictions among high-level government officials. The Democrats, who are firmly against the war, may refuse to elect Obama as their next presidential candidate during the mid-term election in 2010 or presidential election in 2012, which will become Obama's political quagmire. All Obama can do now is pray that the situation in Afghanistan will improve in the next year."

HUNTSMAN